

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.121(b)(1), please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 27, with the following amended paragraph:

C1
--There are various ways of advantageously embodying and developing the teaching of the present invention. Reference is made, for that purpose, to the explanation below of several exemplary embodiments of the invention with reference to the drawings. In conjunction with the explanation of the preferred exemplary embodiments of the invention, a general explanation is also given of preferred embodiments and developments of the teaching.--

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.121(b)(2), please replace the section "BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS" with the following replacement section:

--BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The subject matter of the invention is described with reference to the embodiments shown in the drawings.

C2
Fig 1 shows, in a schematic depiction, a first exemplary embodiment of an optical arrangement according to the present invention in the beam path of a confocal scanning microscope, a point light source being provided as the light source and the scanning microscope being depicted, for the sake of simplicity, merely schematically by way of its components;

Fig. 2 shows, in a schematic depiction, a second exemplary embodiment of an optical arrangement according to the present invention in the beam path of a confocal scanning microscope, an optical fiber being provided as the light source and the scanning microscope being depicted, for the sake of simplicity, merely schematically by way of its components;

Fig. 3 shows, in a schematic depiction, a third exemplary embodiment of an optical arrangement according to the present invention in the beam path of a confocal scanning microscope, a laser light source or laser beam being provided as the light source and the scanning microscope being depicted, for the sake of simplicity, merely schematically by way of its components;

Fig. 4 shows, in a schematic depiction, another exemplary embodiment generally similar to that shown in Fig. 1 but further including an optical component in the illumination beam path for altering an intensity distribution of the illumination beam; and

Fig. 5 shows, in a schematic depiction, another exemplary embodiment generally similar to that shown in Fig. 3, wherein a laser light beam from a further laser light source is coupled into the illumination beam path.--

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.121(b)(1), please add the following two paragraphs by inserting them at page 6, line 25 (blank line) of the specification:

-- Fig. 4 shows an arrangement according to the present invention wherein the illumination optical system comprises a further optical component 17 in the illumination beam path that influences or favors edge illumination. Optical component 17 can be an additional lens, an annular stop, or a holographically generated optical element, the principal result thereof being that the ordinarily Gaussian intensity distribution of the laser beam is expanded in the edge regions. For example it would be possible thereby, especially in the case of confocal laser scanning microscopy, to achieve a constant intensity distribution over the entire entry pupil without causing substantial overillumination of the entry pupil of the objective. An intensity profile deviating therefrom may also be advantageous for a specific application.